

MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN
OF WARRENTON HELD ON MARCH 23, 2006

The adjourned meeting of the Council of the Town of Warrenton was held on March 23, 2006 in the Town Council Chambers.

Councilmembers present: Mayor George Fitch, presiding, Vice Mayor David A. Norden, Councilmen Birge S. Watkins, John V. Albertella, John E. Williams, Dennie M. Sutherland, Terrence L. Nyhous and John S. Lewis, Jr.

Also present: Kenneth L. McLawhon, Town Manager, Whitson W. Robinson, Town Attorney, and Evelyn J. Weimer, Town Recorder.

The invocation was given by Councilman John E. Williams.

Central Business District

The Mayor called upon Mr. Nyhous to make a presentation concerning the Central Business District. Mr. Nyhous introduced Mr. Stanley Livengood, Economic Development Director for Orange, Virginia, who would be addressing Council later in the meeting.

Mr. Nyhous's reviewed his presentation which had been distributed to Council, staff and the audience and which is a part of the record for the meeting.

Mr. Nyhous asked the Town Manager if General Assembly approval is required to establish an enterprise zone and he responded that there were financial requirements and an extensive process to go through.

Mr. Watkins asked if an overlay district was established could it also be used for incentives. Mr. McLawhon stated it depended on how it was structured since enterprise zones are different from developing an industrial development authority.

Mr. Livengood stated that he is hearing that the Town would like to see the Main Street and maybe Lee/Horner Streets to be more of a retail commercial area but banks and offices are coming into that area. He indicated that there are federal programs establishing "hub" zones and giving preferential to businesses getting federal contracts. He also indicated that there was a federal trade zone if there was exporting or importing involved. He stated that the zones could be put outside the space that the town wants for commercial and retail uses which would draw the offices to the areas which have incentives for federal programs. He noted that the enterprise zone was a state program that the Town would not qualify for but could set up their own. Mr. Livengood further stated that the program should be called something different so it would not be confused with the state program.

Mr. Watkins noted that those property owners located in the historic district doing rehabilitation work on the structures could apply for federal and state tax credits.

Mr. Nyhous stated that when he looked at the overlay possibility it was envisioned for Main Street with the incentives being for the entire Central Business District.

Mr. Nyhous felt that the recommendation should be completed using existing organizations. He indicated that if an overlay is desired, the Council should make a motion at their next meeting to refer it to the Planning Commission. He also indicated that the Finance Committee Chairman should begin to develop incentive plans since it would take a while. He recommended that EDAC meet with the Partnership and find places where funds could be obtained. Further, he stated that Council maintain control over this by having the Financial Committee Chairman oversee it.

Mr. Livengood stated he was impressed that Warrenton had taken the proactive approach to addressing concerns. He suggested that the Town should look at a way to promote residential development and allow mixed uses so that the second floors become residential develop to promote and support commercial growth. He stated once there are people downtown there was an incentive for businesses to locate there.

He further stated that perhaps incentives to business owners who promote retail tenants and retain them could be considered. He indicated a community development authority could be developed to help fund infrastructure improvements such as a parking garage. The industrial development authority could provide tax exempt bond financing for public purposes.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Evelyn J. Weimer, Town Recorder